

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Advanced Interconnections

Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Services

Advanced Interconnections Corporation

Client Profile:

Advanced Interconnections Corporation (AIC) is a leading manufacturer of electronic connectors. These connectors are used in telecommunications, automotive, military, and medical equipment application. The company employs 150 people at its facility in West Warwick, Rhode Island.

Situation:

AIC's customer service representatives were being turned away by customers who couldn't wait for documentation of special products they needed. The time for completing an engineering documentation package was averaging two and one-half weeks. AIC had just begun a Lean initiative under the guidance of the Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Services (RIMES), a NIST MEP network affiliate, and decided to use the Engineering group as a pilot Lean core team.

Solution:

Under the guidance of RIMES, AIC's Lean team used Value Stream Mapping to describe both the existing process and an improved future process. The team agreed that an average response time of five days was a reasonable target and would meet customers' expectations. The team created a system using colored folders to track individual jobs. A different color is used for each day of the week. The designer/drafters pick up jobs in the order they are received by Engineering. Priority jobs must be authorized by a supervisor and are placed in red folders. AIC quality control procedures require drawings to be checked by a different person than the drawing creator. A clear bin is used to stage checking jobs. The colored folders and checking bin are located in the center of the Engineering area and are clearly visible by the drafting group and management. A control chart is used to track the weekly average duration for jobs. Within a few weeks, workflow was improved, and the average completion time for engineering requests dropped from 12 days to 5 days.

Results:

- * Realized \$10,000 in cost savings.
- * Reduced lead time from 12 days to 5 days.
- * Improved workflow.

Testimonial:

"The customer service representatives were ecstatic with the lead-time reduction. The system worked so well that a similar color-coded system was used in the terminal cleaning operation, where overtime was eliminated resulting in a \$10,000 annual savings.

Mark Leach, Engineering Manager

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